



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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GOVERNOR CALLS ON PRESIDENTS TO ACT ON BORDER SECURITY

PHOENIX – On the eve of their meeting in Mexico tomorrow, Governor Napolitano today sent a letter to President George W. Bush and President Felipe Calderon Hinojosa of Mexico entreating them to address U.S.-Mexico border problems.

“Now is the time to end the embarrassment of a failed immigration system. Both nations created this failure.” Governor Napolitano wrote. “Nothing short of both nations working together can bring about the solution.”

The Governor has met with both leaders recently to discuss border issues. She traveled to Mexico City to speak with President Calderon in February. She then had the opportunity to meet with President Bush during the National Governors Association winter meeting. Both presidents have agreed that the border is a top priority.

The Governor stated that the two leaders should use this meeting as an opportunity to layout shared goals such as:

- The U.S.-Mexico Border will be the most secure in the world, with reform adopted in both countries
- The United States will implement an immigration system that is economically realistic, flexible and innovative
- Mexico will modernize its economy and end the practice of using the United States labor market as a safety valve

“The momentum for change has never been better,” Napolitano said in the letter. “You have the resources and capacity to lead your countries into a relationship based on United States and Mexican economic interdependency and centuries of close social interaction.”

The Governor laid out the steps that must be taken to solve the problems at the U.S.-Mexico border. First, leaders must stop merely talking about border reform and act to create a holistic immigration plan that calls for a temporary guest worker program without amnesty, enforceable employer sanctions, a modern and streamlined visa system, and a process to resolve the status of the 12 million people in the U.S. – many who overstayed their visas or risked their lives crossing the border for a better way of life. Second, both nations must address the safety and security of our border and stop the violent criminal activity that plagues the border regions. And finally, the U.S. and Mexico must work together to stimulate economic development in Mexico.

Napolitano pointed to the Arizona-Sonora relationship as a model for U.S.-Mexico relations. Arizona, through the Arizona-Mexico Commission, has worked with Governor Bours of Sonora to address common challenges. The letter from Governor Napolitano to the Presidents is attached.